1973: CLARK'S SISTER IS REPRIMANDED FOR BUYING HIM COMIC BOOKS FOR HIS 10TH BIRTHDAY, BECAUSE IT MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT HIS DEVELOPMENT.
A2
EH ROCK!
CAD

1993: CLARK HAS SINCE OVERCOME HIS OLD ADDICTION TO COMIC BOOKS, BUT IS NOW ADDICTED TO SOMETHING ELSE:
CLAY GEERDES' COMIX WAVE!

TEXAS FU

Does Joe Bob Briggs make up those movies he reviews in **WE ARE THE WEIRD**? Why have I never seen any of those movies advertised in the Bay Area? Is there really a Stacey Travis? Is there a movie called **NEKROMANTIC**? Is that guy in buckskin drag with his arm around Michelle Bauer really Joe Bob or did he hire a male model as a body double? You know writers are folks who answer questions that haven't been asked and it is possible that some of us rap about movies that haven't been made. Is it possible that Joe Bob has a studio in Dallas where he and his gang fake movie stills and make up outrageous titles just so he can count the coyote bites and breasts and vampiric overbite fu in his **WEIRD** newsletter and sell it to your readers for $3 a hit? Is there really a Joe Bob Briggs? Write and see. POB 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Is there really a Clay Geerdes? Heh! Heh!

Dave Sim discusses pen tips and inking in **CEREBUS 169**. Some good information for those getting into the craft of comic art. If you don't see Dave's comic locally, order one from Aardvark-Vanaheim, POB 1674, Sta C, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2. You can see Dave discuss his Cerebus project on Rhino's **MASTERS OF COMIC BOOK ART** tape. 1987.

A PLETHORA OF LAWYERS

America may lack engineers and scientists, but we lead the world in the production of lawyers. America has half the lawyers in the entire world. . . .We have four percent of the world population. We have eighteen percent of the world economy. But we have fifty percent of the lawyers. And thirty-five thousand more every year, pouring out of the schools. That's where our productivity's directed. That's where our national focus is. Half our TV shows are about lawyers. American has become Land of Lawyers. Everybody suing. Everybody disputing. Everybody in court. After all, three quarters of a million American lawyers have to do *something*. That have to make their three hundred thousand a year. Other countries think we're crazy.

Michael Crichton
RISING SUN, 1992.

Bill Griffith told Gary Groth that **COMIX BOOK** was a cheap imitation of **ARCADE** [TCJ]. I found that a bit puzzling since **COMIX BOOK** came out a year before **ARCADE**. And who was in that first issue of **COMIX BOOK**? Tim Boxell, Howard Cruse, Vince Davis, Kim Deitch, Evert Geradts, Don Glassford, Justin Green, Denis Kitchen, Peter Loft, Peter Poplaski, John Pound, Ted Richards, Trina Robbins, Bill Sanders, Scott Shaw, Art Spiegelman [his **ACE HOLE** story], Steve Stiles, Skip Williamson, and Basil Wolverton. Since Art Spiegelman was one of the editors of **ARCADE**, does this mean that Art is a cheap imitation of himself, Bill?

The truth of the matter is that underground publishers paid when they paid, but Marvel was the home of the regular paycheck and when the word went around that Stan Lee and Marvel were backing **COMIX BOOK**, the majority of the artists on the scene sent anything they had ready in hopes of getting one of those paychecks. Did they SELL OUT TO THE ESTABLISHMENT? No, they sold some art for rent and grocery money.

BOSTON BEEHIVES

You can read all about the women's hockey team, the Boston Beehives, in the latest issue of **GIRL JOCK**, the mag that makes up for the lack of coverage of women in sports in the male oriented mags like Sport's Illustrated. Cartoonists include **Joan Hilty** and **Julie Frank**. $3.95 from POB 2533, Berkeley, CA 94702.

ART GUARDS

Turns out that almost half the guys working as guards at the Harvard Art Museums in Cambridge are artists and **Mick Cusimano** is one of them. Mick's work appears in **SQUAWK** and **FINE PRINT**. Folks in the Boston area can find copies at the Naked City Coffeehouse or in the foyer of Tower Records.

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P. O. Box 7094, Berkeley, CA 94707. All Rights Reserved. Artwork and material herein ©the artists or writers involved and used here for promotional purposes only. $11 for the next twelve issues. $45 for a complete set of back issues. Checks to Clay Geerdes. MO's or cash, fine.

FOR BETTER..OR WORSE?

Yes, but what if you're gay and you come out in a comic strip? What price gay lib in the funny papers? **Lynn Johnson** devoted a recent story in her *For Better or Worse* strip to Lawrence's coming out of the closet. Universal Press Syndicate reported 20 cancellations and said that 40 of the 1400 papers that take the strip declined to run it until the sequence ended. Some people cancelled their papers in Memphis, Denver, and St. Louis. Lynn Johnson was surprised at the amount of anger and hatred she stimulated with her strip. She told **Examiner** columnist Stephanie Salter: "I felt that if I wrote a story about a young man who has a difference, and I did it sensitively with dignity, that people would realize it was a story about acceptance and not homosexuality. I never even mentioned the word 'sex.'" [**Examiner**, 4/25/93, p. A-13]. Johnson, 45, mother of two teenagers, one 15, the other 20, was amazed at the flood of mail she received re the Lawrence story. She did the story for a friend who died of AIDS.

Living in the Bay Area where the gay population constitutes a significant voting bloc, I've always been surprised to see so little of the gay lifestyle reflected in the daily comic strips. I know many people who have gone through the experience Lawrence's father went through in Johnson's strip and I thought her treatment was realistic and valid. Gay cartoonists have been a part of the underground comix scene since the early seventies, some overtly, others covertly and it is likely that the general public will be seeing more gay themes in comic strips in the coming years. Gay and bi-sexuality is dealt with openly in the current run of **SHADE THE INCREDIBLE CHANGING MAN.** I know the newspaper comic strip is incredibly reactionary as a form and it takes years for reality to infiltrate those sacred panels and force them to become mirrors of the real world in contrast to little boxes of attitudes few people ever had. If I were to see a comic strip that reflected the polyglot multiracial neighborhood I live in in Berkeley, that strip would have black Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, black Muslims, yuppies, gay men and women, Jews, Japanese, and whoever the newest tenants are. The majority of the strips that run in my local paper, the Oakland **Tribune**, are unrelated to my lifestyle. As a hetero male living in this multiracial neighborhood, I am a minority member, but I don't really *feel* that way. I've been here for fifteen years and I enjoy the differences. I've never felt the need to make the people around me conform to my way of thinking. When I compare the comic pages with my community, I find that a lot of people have been excluded, that the editors who buy the strips have arbitrarily decided that most of the people in my community do not exist, that the comic strips will reflect only a small percentage of the people who live here. No, I don't like that. I feel that the comic pages should reflect the community, not be ongoing propaganda for an artificial lifestyle no one lives.

Go for it, Lynn. For every reader you lose, you'll gain ten more who respect truth and integrity over mediocrity. -C. G. 4/27/93

Tomorrow is an electric age.
--William Shatner

EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED KID STRIPS

If you saw **Whoopi Goldberg** interview **Charles Schulz** some weeks back, you learned that Whoopi has Woodstock tattooed on or very near her left breast. Make a note.

I read an article from the Chicago **Tribune** recently [I lost my copy so can't give you the reference, so you'll have to check the RGP for yourself.] in which Schulz was called a burn-out. The writer noted numerous worn-out and lame gag lines Schulz has used ad infinitum, well, that's true of most cartoonists who have long strip careers, but Schulz is someone I can still read and enjoy. Sure, I've seen the gag before, but I've seen all the movie plots before, too. Cartooning is a visual profession and repetition is the key to economic survival. I think Schulz has done well since he got his first work published in **TIP TOP** back in 1949. As far as I know, he has always done his own work and he doesn't even buy gags like Hank Ketchum and numerous other one-panel cartoonists.

Someone who needs to take a little time off is Watterson. I think he has lost perspective on his Calvin and Hobbes strip. Calvin has been a hostile nasty little asshole for a long time now, a little boy with a great imagination, but no friends, a character with no real relationships at all, certainly not with his parents who have to deal with his habitually negative behavior. For all his fumbling around, Charley Brown relates to other kids; so does Lucy Van Pelt who comes closest to Calvin in her nasty behavior. Watterson is a fine cartoonist, but many of his recent strips show a slipshod approach to the craft. He scribbles the characters and repeats the sledding routine or a Calvin attack on Susie, but his heart isn't in it. If he feels the characters are exhausted, he ought to quit for awhile and draw something else. I'm sure he has other ideas. Continuing to display what has become regressive behavior in his strip, Watterson is projecting pathological behavior as entertainment. It's normal for children to give up their imaginary friends and stuffed animals when they enter school, to move on to real relationships with their peers. My reaction to the recent C&H strips has been negative. It's not funny to watch a little boy failing at life. It's sad. Schulz realized this when he let Charley Brown win his first baseball game.

-Clay Geerdes 5/9/93

FRESNO SKETCHBOOK

I first met Doug Hansen when he was 19. He was coming up the driveway to my Indian Rock place back in 1973 when I was working on the first Underground Comix Convention with the guys from what is now Comics and Comix. Doug did some nice work for the minis and found his niche doing editorial cartoons and illos from the **FRESNO BEE**. A collection of these sketches had been published by the paper. 1626 E Street, Fresno, California 93786-0001. A lot of familiar images. I taught English in Fresno at the State College back in 1965-67.

The young star of **This Boy's Life**, **Leonardo DiCaprio**, is the son of **George DiCaprio**. In the early days of the underground comix, George did **GREASER COMICS**. He came to the Bay Area around the time of the first Underground Comix Convention in April of 1973 then moved to Los Angeles around 1977.

Image Magazine for April 18, 1993, featured articles on **Art Spiegelman** and **Bill Griffith**, along with a nice tribute to **Harvey Kurtzman**.

SHE-INAL??

Urinette, a company in Pensacola, Florida, markets a urinal for females. The She-inal has a funnel with a long handle attached to a flexible hose leading up to a ceramic fixture. A dispenser provides a biodegradable paper cover for the funnel. Since there is no seat, the company says, the She-inal is more sanitary than a typical public toilet. And because users don't have to spend time covering a seat with toilet paper or undressing so much, they can use the She-inal faster.

Anything to get more work out of the employees, huh?

The Microcenter in Moffitt Library over at UC has been allowing people to compute in the nude. This gives a whole new meaning to spread sheets, n'est pas? Oh, well, as long as they hose the place down at the end of the day.

Robert Beerbohm is curator of a gallery devoted to the art of the late **Rick Griffin**. The gallery is located in the Cannery complex in San Francisco.

STANLEY MOUSE HAS LIVER SURGERY

Poster artist **Stanley Mouse**, 52, entered the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco in April of 1993, diagnosed with a serious liver ailment. Mouse is best known for his art work for the Grateful Dead. He created the skull and roses logo and gave the Dead their psychedelic image. With his collarator Alton Kelley, Mouse designed many posters for the Avalon Ballroom in the mid and late sixties. He went on to design iconographic images for Journey, Steppenwolf, and the Jefferson Starship. Born Stanley Miller, is it suspected that Mouse's liver disease is related to inhalation of toxic fumes from his air brushes. He received a liver transplant from a donor in Arizona on Sunday, April 25, 1993. Part of the bill was paid by the Grateful Dead and the rest will be raised through benefit concerts being organized by several bands. Like most artists, Mouse had no medical insurance. If you'd like to help, send a donation to the Freehand Foundation, West America Bank, 1177 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939. Ref: Peter Stack, **Chronicle**, 4/28/93, pp. E-1, 2.

PLASTER CASTER GETS CASTS BACK

Back in the sixties when Janis Joplin was singing *Down on Me* just about every weekend at the Avalon on Sutter in San Francisco, a couple of women were traveling around the backstages and dressing rooms of earth making plaster casts of famous erections. You can read the details in a book Rolling Stone did called *The Groupies* if you can find a copy in an old bookstore in your area. But what you probably don't know is that Plaster Caster **Cynthia Albritton** recently won a suit against Frank Zappa's former manager Herb Cohen, forcing him to return the castings she had given him for safe keeping. She sued Cohen for her mementos and he sued her. Cohen alleged that a contract for Albritton to produce diaries about her experiences with rock stars for his company, Bizarre Productions, Inc., included rights to the casts. Superior Court Judge Lillian Stevens decided in favor of Albritton. Involved were 23 bronze casts of rock star genitalia made from her original plaster molds. The original plaster casts were lost or destroyed after metal casts were made. 4/93

BABY SUE continues lambasting anything and everything in her latest pink covered issue. $1 for a sample copy. POB 1111, Decatur, GA 30031-1111.

STEREOTYPED ARABS IN DISNEY'S ALLADIN

The following passage is quoted from Jack Shaheen's "Shattering Stereotypes: Media Images of Arabs," a lecture given at the University of Colorado at Boulder, Jan. 26, 1993. For further information about Professor Shaheen's forthcoming book, *THE COMIC BOOK ARAB*, send an SASE to David Barsamian, 2129 Mapleton, Boulder, CO 80304. A tape of the lecture is available.

Aladdin?

Yes, I saw Disney's *Aladdin*. I think there were excellent opportunities for Disney to change the stereotypes in *Aladdin*. There are three major mistakes in *Aladdin*. One is the opening song, which tags an entire people as being barbaric. No room for that in a Disney film. Two, all of the townspeople, the merchants and members of the sultan's guards, are barbaric. They run around with sabers trying to cut off hands. There's one scene in the film where the princess takes an apple to give to a starving child, and the merchant is going to cut off her hand with a saber. That's sort of a shot against Islam and also against the people. Now, whenever you criticize you should always try to have a solution. If you look at the images of the people—I'm not talking about Jasmine and Aladdin, whom by the way they call "Al." They won't even call him Aladdin. He says, "Just call me al." If you look at the people who inhabit the underwater kingdom in *The Little Mermaid*, a lovely film, they're nice people. Disney could very easily have done that with this particular film, instead of demonizing the residents of this fictional kingdom. He could have had balanced images and had the vendors in the marketplace be benevolent.

Finally, where was Aladdin's mother, who plays such a prominent role? She was excluded. Disney's producers said she was excluded because she slowed down the movie. You can't have a mother. Come on! If they have enough imagination to do what they did with Robin Williams and the genie, certainly we could have had an animated mother who didn't slow the plot! What an excuse! I guess now you've got my Irish up. My name is Shaheen, which is close to Sheehan and Shanahan. What outrages me most about Disney is the silence. They simply will not have a dialogue with concerned people about this film. There's an induced silence on the part of Disney not to comment. One spokesperson said, "We've had some criticisms, but they're just from a small minority. They don't count." It's making a ton of money. It's number one. Jasmine and Aladdin are marvelous characters. Have the villain, Jafar. But don't denigrate the entire people or culture with the manner in which they've done it.